

Post World War II Automobile Era Roadside Architecture in NH



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Cover Photo: Earl's Drive-In, Rochester, c. 1955
Courtesy of William B. Mac Gregor, Jr.

I. Introduction

Post World War II Tourist Roadside Architecture in NH was prepared by Lisa Mausolf, Preservation Consultant, under contract for Cumberland Farms as mitigation for the removal of Earl's (Martin's) Drive-In at 2 Flat Rock Bridge Road in Rochester, New Hampshire.



Profile Motel, 391 US Rt. 3, Lincoln

This document is intended to build on the existing context *Mid-20th Century Architecture in NH: 1945-1975* authored by Mausolf in 2012 which took a broad look at high-style (nonresidential) buildings of the period, predominantly designed by architects. The present report is intended to focus on automobile-era property types that would have been typically found on tourist-oriented roads in the state during the post-World War II period. The intent is to look briefly at all regions of the state and capture elements of the changing design aesthetic of the period. As with the 2012 document, the goal of this report is to establish historic and architectural contexts for New Hampshire's resources of the recent past in order to better inform future discussions as they are faced with alteration or removal. This document is intended to be another chapter in an ongoing dialogue but is by no means the final word.

Time and budget constraints precluded the possibility of driving every road in New Hampshire which acted as a conduit for tourists traveling to the lakes, mountains, seacoast or other popular destinations in the post-World War II period although many miles were covered nonetheless. The files at the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (DHR) provided information on previously surveyed resources. Important research sources included *New Hampshire Profiles Magazine* which was published monthly beginning in 1951 and included extensive advertisements and some stories covering tourist-oriented businesses. The publication, *New Hampshire Highways*, published by the New Hampshire Good Roads Association beginning in 1946 offered information on changes to the state's road system. The *New Hampshire Architect*, published by the New Hampshire Chapter of the American Institute of Architects from 1949 to 1962 and its successor, *Granite State Architect* (1963-1972) included several articles on motels designed by New Hampshire architects. Local histories, postcards and directories helped fill in details on possible resources that were encountered in the field. The many on-line resources made available by those with an interest in or passion for a particular building type, hotel or restaurant chain were incredibly useful and are listed in the Bibliography.

It is hoped that this report will make the reader more aware of the mid-century commercial/tourist-oriented resources of this period that can be found throughout the state. While they are most plentiful along the north-south routes most commonly used by tourists traveling to the lakes and mountains, they can also be found along the side of the road, in downtowns, "miracle miles", "gasoline alleys" and "automobile rows". Similarly, a number of factors are in play in determining which resources survive in a relatively high state of preservation. Many have been remodeled in attempts by owners to appear fresh and current. Nor was the mid-century design aesthetic universally embraced although admittedly New Hampshire was never blessed with the volume of modernistic examples found in other areas of the country. In addition to changing consumer tastes, there are other considerations such as the overall economic health of a community or region that can leave buildings in declining areas "mothballed" and without value while in other areas older structures are swept away in the name of progress. Ideally we will all become a little more thoughtful in considering the mid-century resources that do survive and realize that they constitute an important chapter in the growth and development of the state.

II. Historic Context, NH in the Post World War II Period

In New Hampshire, as across the country, the Post World War II period was a time of great economic prosperity that was accompanied by many new challenges and developments. Between 1940 and 1980 the State's population rose from 491,524 to 920,610. The circulation pattern of roadways changed dramatically, multiple links to the Seacoast, Lakes and Mountains were improved, and the number of cars on the roads increased exponentially. Tourism had long been an important part of the state's economy dating back to the railroad and the age of the grand resort hotels. But as the old primary industries such as textiles, shoes, hosiery, and paper weakened, expanding the tourist trade became increasingly critical to the state economy. New types of service businesses developed, focusing on customers with their automobiles and these businesses became concentrated on popular travel routes, especially those leading to the lakes and mountains. In time, as some of these well-travelled roads became clogged with cars, bypasses and larger divided highways with limited access were constructed. Taken together, these themes and circumstances formed the setting for New Hampshire's Mid-20th century roadside architecture.



Changes in the Vacation Travel Industry

The postwar period saw a rapid expansion of the vacation travel industry throughout the country. The American consumer generally had more money to spend; incomes typically rose faster than prices. Many unions negotiated holiday pay and paid vacations were included in many employee packages. The number of retired people with pensions or annuities also increased.¹ Simply put, more Americans could now afford to “hit the road”.

The Changing State Economy

In the first half of the 20th century New Hampshire’s economic profile saw a multitude of changes. Agriculture continued to decline and many of the textile companies that had fueled the state’s 19th century growth closed or departed for southern states where labor was cheaper. The largest, Amoskeag Manufacturing in Manchester, closed in 1935. Other industries such as shoemaking and papermaking overtook textiles. By 1955 the Brown Company, a timber and paper firm in Berlin, was the largest single employer in the state.

During this period, the tourist industry became an increasingly important contributor to the state’s economy and supporting this industrial development was the expansion of recreational opportunities – “more summer homes, more parks, better roads, more hotels, more ski lodges to attract the outdoor enthusiasts, the casual tourist, and the summer resident”.² In 1970, tourism was the second-largest industry in New Hampshire, contributing an estimated \$300 million to the state.

Rise of the Automobile and Tourist Industry

As stated in a 1964 report by the State of New Hampshire State Planning Project, “The automobile has revolutionized patterns of land use and it has also revolutionized human behavior”.³ The first year that car registrations in the U.S. exceeded the 100,000 mark was in 1906; in 1913 the historic million-car registration milestone was reached.⁴ By 1950 the U.S. had 25 million registered automobiles on the road. Most of these vehicles predated World War II and were in poor condition as no automobiles or parts were produced during the war due to rationing and other restrictions. Production accelerated to meet consumer demand in the years that followed and by 1958 there were more than 67 million cars registered in the U.S., more than twice the number at the start of the decade.⁵ In 1963 the total registration of motor vehicles in the U.S. reached 82 million cars. That same year the New Hampshire

¹ Andrew Heath. Recreation Property in New Hampshire, 1945-1952. Concord: State Planning and Development Commission, 1954, p. 6.

² Elizabeth Forbes Morison and Elting E. Morison. *New Hampshire: A Bicentennial History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, Inc., 1976, p. 190.

³ *Travel Habits of the Motorist in New Hampshire, Part 1 - Summer*. Concord: State of New Hampshire State Planning Project, September 1964, p. 22.

⁴ Ibid, p. 24.

⁵ Keith Reid, “Happy days – For petroleum marketers, the 1950s lived up to the nostalgia”, *National Petroleum News*, June 2004, pp 24-25.

Department of Safety, Division of Motor Vehicles registered a then all- time record of more than 320,000 motor vehicles.⁶

Record automobile production, higher incomes, and more leisure time combined to make scenic New Hampshire a popular tourist destination in the Post War period. In 1963 visits to the White Mountain National Forest set a record attendance of 3,350,000. That year, the White Mountain National Forest ranked fourth in attendance records of all 155 National Forests in the U.S.⁷ In 1963-4 an estimated 175,000 seasonal home residents occupied over 36,000 vacation homes in New Hampshire. Over 21,000 boys and girls were estimated to attend New Hampshire summer camps and the New Hampshire lodging industry had a capacity of about 80,000.⁸ These numbers do not include those visitors staying in the homes of friends or relatives, camping or “daytrippers” driving in or through the state. Taken together these visitors made significant expenditures on lodging, amusement, recreation, gasoline service stations, auto repair and eating and drinking establishments that fueled the construction of many new businesses during the period.



State Planning and Development Commission publication, 1942

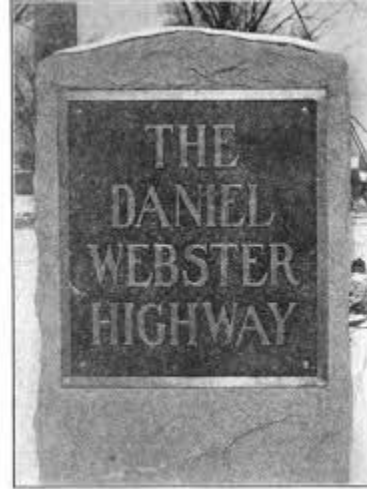
⁶ *Travel Habits of the Motorist in New Hampshire*, p. 24 & 72.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 13.

⁸ Systems Analysis and Research Corporation, *Economic Impact of Recreation, Vacation and Travel on New Hampshire*. Concord, NH: State of New Hampshire State Planning Project, July 1965.

The State Road System

In 1915 the state highway system had about 75 miles of paved or improved roads.⁹ The 200-mile Daniel Webster Highway, dedicated in 1922, was an example of the improvement of old historic routes in the early 20th century. Located on the west side of the Merrimack River, it extends from Nashua and the Massachusetts state line north through Manchester, Concord, and Laconia to the Canadian line north of Colebrook. It was the main automobile thoroughfare from Boston to the White Mountains and it was the most traveled road in the state during this period. In 1926 it became U.S. Route 3.



It was in 1925 that the New Hampshire legislature first appropriated funds (\$25,000) to publicize the attractions of the state for tourists.¹⁰ Improved roads brought urban dwellers to the state's pristine landscapes, lakes and mountains but also allowed New Hampshire's rural residents easier access to commercial opportunities in towns and cities. At the end of World War II, New Hampshire was served by the system of primary and secondary roadways visible in Figure 1 (the primary roadways are the darker). In the late 1940s and early 1950s roads like Rt. 3, Rt. 28, Rt. 16, and Rt. 302 served as the main conduits to bring visitors to the mountains and lakes. Much of the land use which developed along these roads was based on tourist travel, resulting in a concentration of commercial activities such as gas stations, motels, and snack bars. Routes 4, 9, 101, and 202 were important east-west routes although typically not as significant in terms of tourism.

⁹ *New Hampshire Highways*, June 1946, p. 1.

¹⁰ Ronald and Grace Jager. *The Granite State New Hampshire: An Illustrated History*. Sun Valley, California: American Historical Press, 2000: 112.

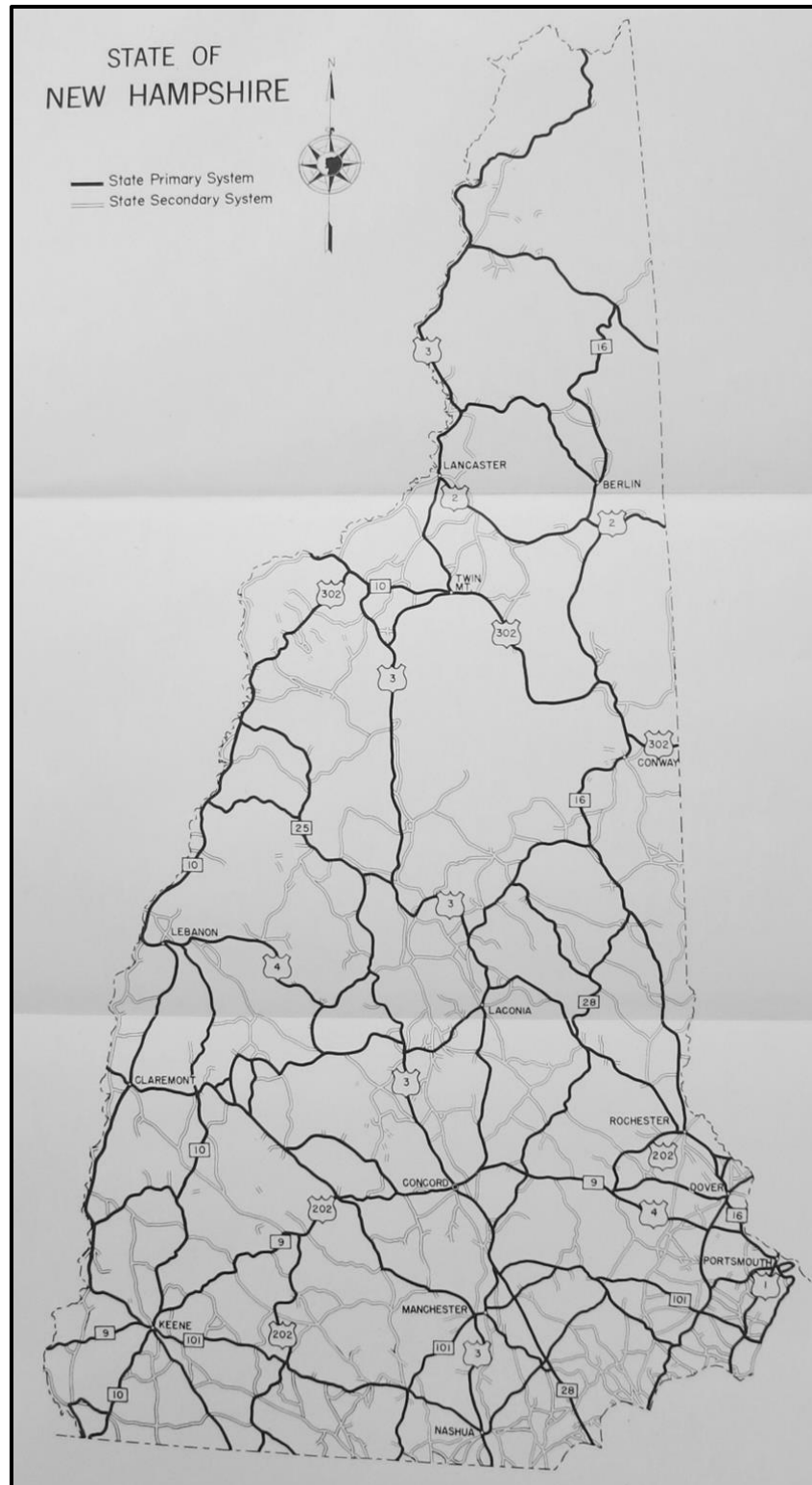


Figure 1

System of Roadways in NH in place at end of World War II

Other roads such as the Kancamagus Highway were constructed for other purposes. Initially a logging road, it is best known as a scenic road and useful shortcut. The White Mountain National Forest was established in 1918 and consists of three discontinuous areas. In 1959 the 34 mile Kancamagus Highway was completed through the White Mountain National Forest from Lincoln to Conway and became New Hampshire's newest major tourist attraction. Construction of the road started in 1934 and sections at either end had been in operation for some years previous. When the final connector was completed in 1959 only eight of the 34 miles were paved. As part of the project a new wayside area was constructed at the summit, a vista look-out was located on the Pemigewasset River side and another was sited on the Swift River side. In 1960, an article by the American Automobile Association declared the Kancamagus a "Gorgeous Mountain Drive for the 'Fearless Ones'"¹¹.



Scenic vista site on the Kancamagus Highway

¹¹ Jean Erickson, "Shunpike to Kancamagus: Gorgeous Mountain Drive For the 'Fearless Ones'", *Boston Globe*, September 11, 1960, p. 69.

Bypasses and Divided Highways

The first major Post World War II improvement to the State's highway system came in the form of the "New Hampshire Turnpike" (the present Interstate 95) which was designed to relieve conditions on U.S. 1. In 1949 U.S. Rt. 1 carried the most traffic of any highway in the State with an annual traffic count of three and a quarter million cars. In 1950 what became the New Hampshire portion of Interstate 95, approximately fourteen miles in length, was opened from Seabrook to the traffic circle in Portsmouth. The new four lane highway was laid out parallel to Rt. 1.

Other tourist routes leading to the interior of New Hampshire also underwent major changes. In 1953 the New Hampshire Legislature approved construction of the "Eastern Turnpike" (later renamed the Spaulding Turnpike). The initial segment was opened to traffic in 1956. The second 17 miles, extending from the present Exit 6 to the U.S. 202/NH 11/NH 125 junction in Rochester, was opened to traffic in 1957. As a result, traffic on roads like Rt. 16 switched from tourists to locals.

Similarly, the completion of the "Central Turnpike" (later renamed the F.E. Everett Turnpike) from the state line in Nashua to Concord in 1955 offered a convenient high-speed bypass to the older Rt. 3 (Daniel Webster Highway). In 1956 President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (also known as the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956), establishing an interstate highway system in the United States. The construction of Interstates 89 and 93 occurred in the early 1960s. By 1965 it was possible to travel by modern expressway (Interstate 93) from the Massachusetts line at Salem to Plymouth, greatly decreasing tourist traffic on older routes such as Rt. 28 and the northern portions of Rt. 3 that paralleled the highway.



Toll Houses on Everett Turnpike at Merrimack
E.H. and M.K. Hunter, architects; *New Hampshire Architect*, Sept. 1957

III. Representative Property Types

Auto Related Businesses (Service Stations/Showrooms)

There is no commercial building type more essential to the mid 20th century roadside culture than the gas station. As the automobile played an ever important role in everyday life, service stations increasingly occupied prime locations on main streets and heavily traveled tourist roads.



New Hampshire Profiles, Jan. 1953

In the Post World War II period the standardized rectangular box introduced in the 1930s remained the primary form for New Hampshire gas stations. The typical box station featured a flat roof and unadorned exterior of porcelain enamel steel or concrete. Each company introduced its own standardized design that was easily identified by the driving public and could be easily replicated. Inherent in the streamlined design was the image of efficiency, cleanliness and professionalism. Each station incorporated service and repair bays, an office with large display windows and restrooms.¹²

The surviving period gas stations are typically found on roads that were once primary conduits but were later bypassed and relegated to secondary status or became disassociated from the original oil company.

Completed in 1940, the Route 1 Bypass in Portsmouth is an example of a road once lined by gas stations. Due to the number of stations lining the 2.55-mile stretch, it was once known as “gasoline alley”. When the new six-lane Piscataqua River Bridge and a connecting piece of I-95 opened in 1972, motorists could drive from Massachusetts to Maine by bypassing the bypass.

¹² Chad Randl, *The Preservation and Reuse of Historic Gas Stations*, National Park Service.

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/46-gas-stations.htm>

Most of the pre-1970 gas station buildings on the Route 1 Bypass have been significantly altered. Constructed c.1950, the former Cole's Gulf Station at 930 Rt. 1 Bypass is the best remaining example of the mid-century gas stations constructed along the road. It retains its enamel porcelain exterior (though no longer white) and is an unusual example of the Streamline/Moderne style with a sweeping curved end.



930 Rt. 1 Bypass, Portsmouth

Pynenburg's Service Station on the Daniel Webster Highway (US Rt. 3) in Merrimack shows how facilities changed and expanded over time to meet new consumer expectations. Initially the business included a roadside restaurant with filling station and about eight tourist cabins. The service station expanded with the construction of a large new two-bay concrete block garage in the 1950s. The gas station was rebuilt and the cabins were removed but the c.1950 garage still stands today. Historically, this station was part of the Jenney and later the Citgo chains. It also included a "Aut-O-Kar" carwash dating from about 1967.



Pynenburg's Service Station & Car Wash, 498 DW Highway (Rt. 3), Merrimack

The box-type gas station was popular in Post World War II New Hampshire. Extant examples include this concrete block station in Concord which has a distinctive pylon accented by glass block above the office entry.



236 North Main Street (Rt. 3), Concord



1580 Hooksett Road (Rt. 3), Hooksett

This Rt. 3 Hooksett gas station was part of the Gulf chain and retains a metal exterior although the office windows that originally wrapped around the corner have been blocked down. Its offset, angled orientation to the road is indicative of stations that were located outside of city centers.

In the 1960s and 1970s gas stations were often designed in the Colonial Revival or Ranch style, reflecting trends in domestic architecture. The former Gulf Station at 3 N. Park Street, facing Lebanon's historic Colburn Park, dates to the early 1960s and incorporates Colonial-inspired details including a brick exterior, pediment front and cupola lantern with balustrade.



3 N. Park Street, Lebanon

A number of gasoline companies adopted a "Ranch" style with low-pitched gable roofs with overhanging eaves supported by projecting beams. This gas station in Salem even has a matching canopy.



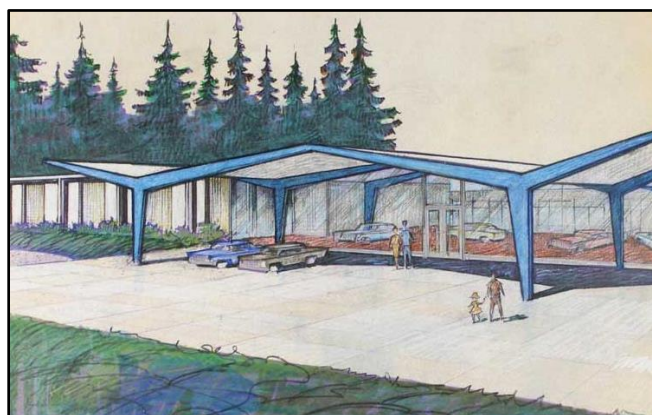
135 S. Broadway (Rt. 28), Salem

A c.1960 “modern” variation on the box gas station design is visible on Rt. 3 in Lincoln, apparently constructed as part of the Indian Head Resort. Both the office and the attached, offset service building are single-story buildings with widely overhanging eaves.



Gas Station, Rt. 3, Lincoln

In addition to gas stations, auto showrooms also played an essential role in the commercial roadside of the period. Auto dealers moved from intown locations to commercial strips like Amherst Street, the Daniel Webster Highway and South Willow Street. Thoroughly modern structures were the perfect backdrop to showcase the latest vehicles. Unfortunately, they often went out of favor just as fast, updated to reflect the latest in consumer tastes and there are few intact examples of the mid century period. In 1965 Manchester architect George Soule designed a distinctive futuristic canopy and structure for Dobles Chevrolet on South Willow Street in Manchester. His drawing for the project is in the collection of the New Hampshire Historical Society. Today, that structure is hidden by a remodeled façade (it is now Quirk Chevrolet).



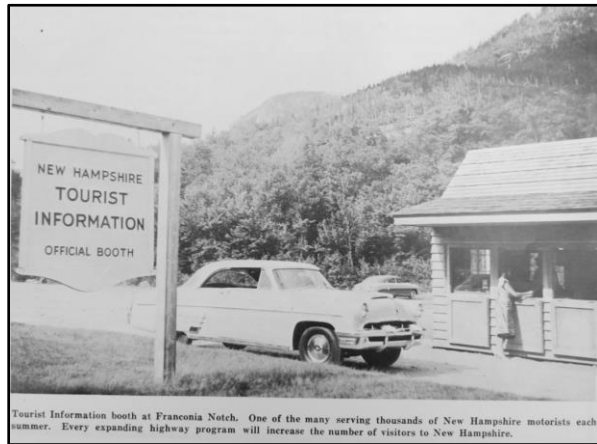
Dobles Chevrolet, 1250 South Willow Street, Manchester
George Soule, architect

Top: *New Hampshire Architect*, March 1965

Bottom: New Hampshire Historical Society website

Government Sponsored Structures

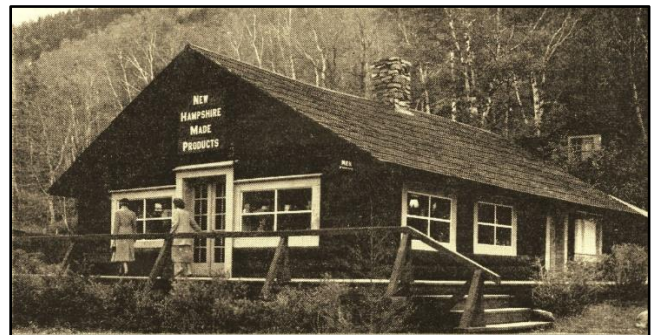
Roadside structures were constructed by the State, municipalities or other organizations to serve the traveling public included rest areas, picnic areas, information booths, parks, and pull-offs.



Left: Franconia Notch, *NH Highways*, Dec. 1953; Right: Laconia, today

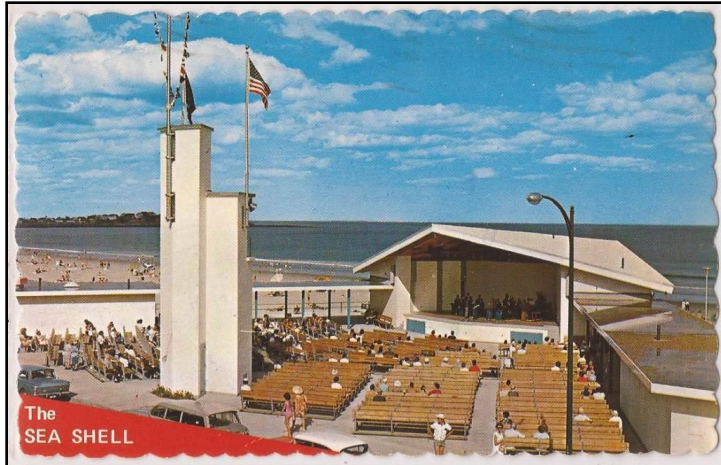
In 1955 there were 30 special Tourist Information Booths located throughout the state, sited at important highway intersections and at popular resort centers.¹³ The small buildings allowed visitors to obtain general information and literature as well as helping the motorist find good accommodations. The size and designs of the information booth building varied by location. In some cases, the buildings were erected for that purpose, in others cabins or other buildings were put to new purposes. In the 1920s the Century Wood Preserving Company made log cabins that were used for information booths. There was one in Nashua and a similar building still stands in Laconia. It is not known how many historic information buildings survive.

In 1953 a rustic building at the Crawford Notch State Park which had been used as a shelter for late season hikers and campers was converted into a center for New Hampshire made products. At the time the interior was remodeled using old boards from a barn razed at the Silver Lake State Park in Hollis. Today the building is used as a Visitor's Center.



Right: *New Hampshire Profiles*, Oct. 1955

¹³ *New Hampshire Profiles*, April 1955.



Undated postcard, Sea Shell Complex, Hampton

The Hampton Sea Shell Complex, erected on Hampton Beach in 1962-3, was a multi-function recreational center combining a life-saving station, Chamber of Commerce visitor center, restrooms, a stage, a state park office and a distinctive slender three-story light tower. Funded by a combination of federal and state funds, it is believed to have been influenced by the National Park Service's Mission 66 program which sought to improve deteriorated and inadequate conditions in the national parks as part of a celebration of the Park Service's 50th anniversary.¹⁴

Designed by W. Brooke Fleck of Hanover, the Sea Shell Complex was constructed of functional, low cost materials. This unusual example of the Modern Movement in New Hampshire was demolished in 2010.

During the same period, the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation also commissioned park structures at two other southern New Hampshire parks. Both Pawtuckaway State Park in Nottingham and Greenfield State Park in Greenfield were developed in the 1960s and saw the construction of small buildings displaying elements of the Modern Movement.¹⁵



Greenfield State Park, Greenfield

¹⁴ Rita Walsh, Inventory form for Sea Shell Complex, August 2009. On file at the NH Division of Historical Resources.

¹⁵ Ibid.

In 1965 there were about 1,260 miles of Federal-aid Primary and Interstate Systems in New Hampshire. The Highway Beautification Act of 1965 provided the New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Highways with funds that were used for the construction of a number of safety rest areas throughout the state, on Interstate and primary highways. The areas provided “parking for trucks and automobiles, picnic facilities, an attractive building containing modern toilet facilities, telephones, and space that will be used to disseminate information on recreational attractions and tourist accommodations that serve our out-of-state visitors and citizens”.¹⁶ By 1969 there were a total of nine rest areas. These included Canterbury, Lebanon, Seabrook, and Sanbornton on the state’s Interstate Highways.



Interior, Canterbury Safety Rest Area, I-93, 1968

Non-Interstate safety rest areas were also constructed and were located on Rt. 9 in Antrim, Rt. 4 in Epsom, North Conway, Shelburne, and Rumney. Many of these were renovated, added onto or totally replaced in the years that followed. The Epsom and Antrim buildings still stand, relatively unchanged, but were closed by the State in 2011 due to budgetary issues.



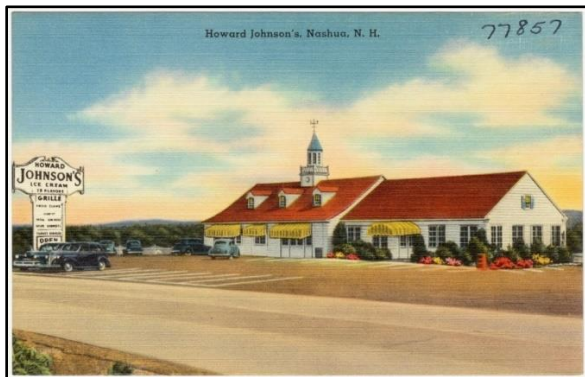
Safety Rest Area, Rt. 9, Antrim

¹⁶ Annual Report, New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Highways, 1966.

Eating Establishments

The Post War economic boom combined with the popularity and increased availability of automobiles translated into the construction of all sorts of roadside eating establishments ranging from family restaurants to drive-ins and fast food establishments. As noted by Liebs, “the successful food merchant needed to make sure that a restaurant’s exterior would send a message readily understood by the class of patron he was aiming for: be it a family with finicky taste, a salesman in a hurry, workers on the way home, or teenagers out for a joyride...operators began to differentiate among customers and develop specific types of restaurants for specific types of patrons.”¹⁷

Family Restaurants



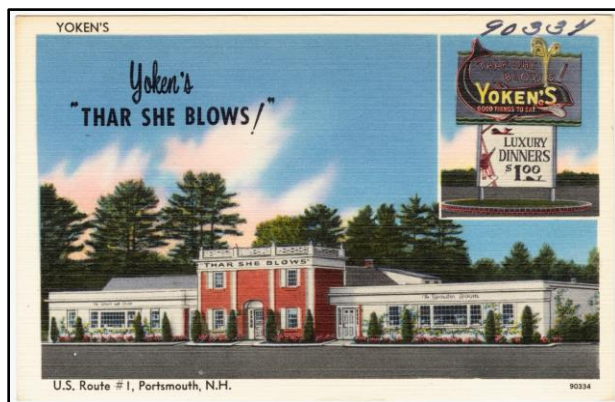
Left: Colonial Howard Johnson's Restaurant, Nashua; Right: modern spire on Pittsburgh Hojos
Boston Public Library, Tichnor Brothers Postcard Collection

Howard Johnson opened his first restaurant in Quincy, Massachusetts in 1929 and in the years that followed achieved huge success from his ability to appeal to the middle-class family on the road. Johnson instituted the franchise concept and in the years that followed Colonial Revival Howard Johnson restaurants, many with signature orange porcelain enamel roof tiles and cupolas were constructed throughout New England, a welcome sight to traveling families. The Colonial cupola later gave way to a more stylized finned modernist design by architect Rufus Nims. At one time there were nine Howard Johnson's restaurants in New Hampshire that were not adjacent to motor lodges. They were located in Boscawen, Dover, Hampton, Beach, Hooksett, Keene, Nashua, North Conway, Salem, Seabrook and West Thornton.¹⁸ Although none operate as Howard Johnson's today, several were transformed into other eating establishments. For instance, a Howard Johnson's Restaurant opened in Dover about 1970, strategically located within view of motorists on the Spaulding Turnpike. The Turnpike had been built in the 1950s and offered travelers a faster ride from Portsmouth to Rochester than the slower old Route 16. The Dover Hojo's was located at the first exit out of Portsmouth/Newington. It was converted into a Burger King in the 1980s and still stands today.

¹⁷ Chester H. Liebs. *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1985, 1995: 196.

¹⁸ Richard Kummerlowe provides extensive information on Howard Johnson's in NH at www.highwayhost.org

In New Hampshire, there were also independent family restaurants that were not associated with nationwide chains. Yoken's Restaurant in Portsmouth was a regional landmark from 1947 until it closed in 2004. Designed in 1946 by Portsmouth architect Lucien Geoffrion (1908-2001) for Harry E. Yoken, the commercial complex on Rt. 1 epitomized the Post War economic boom.¹⁹ The original building had seating for 60 in one dining room plus take out. It was expanded and renovated several times over the years and a gift shop was added. By 1972 Yoken's offered seating for 600 and served 500,000 meals annually. Although the restaurant has been demolished, its iconic neon sign has been restored and is typical of the advertising used to beckon customers in the automobile age.



Yoken's, Rt. 1, Portsmouth
Left: Boston Public Library, Tichnor Brothers Postcard Collection; Right: current view of sign

No discussion of Post-World War II family tourist-oriented restaurants in southern New Hampshire would be complete without mention of the Green Ridge Turkey Farm on the Daniel Webster Highway (Rt. 3) in Nashua. The history of the restaurant parallels the evolution of the development region in general. The original house on the property dated back to Revolutionary times and was reportedly a stage coach hostelry. In 1931 it was purchased by George and Grace Kimball who began their operations with a farm stand which by 1938 had expanded to include turkey sandwiches and ice cream. A full restaurant was built in 1940 but burned in 1950. It was rebuilt and reopened in 1952 by the Flanders family. Later a cocktail lounge and large function room were added and business boomed in the 1950s and 1960s. As billboards proclaimed, "We serve more turkey than any other restaurant in the U.S." The restaurant was operated by members of the Charpentier family from 1954 through the mid 1990s when it was razed and replaced by a Barnes and Noble Book store.²⁰ In addition to neon signs, billboards along Rt. 3 were used to bring in hungry travelers.

¹⁹ A brief biography of Geoffrion appears in the Appendix. Janice Brown, Missing Places: Yoken's Restaurant in Portsmouth NH (1947-2004), Cow Hampshire, 27 Sept. 2013.

²⁰ Ryan W. Owen, "Remembering the Green Ridge Turkey Farm – Nashua, NH", Forgotten New Hampshire, March 19, 2012. <http://forgottennewengland.com/2012/03/19/remembering-the-green-ridge-turkey-farm-nashua-nh/>



c.1960 advertising for Green Ridge Turkey Farm Restaurant, Rt. 3, Nashua included print and billboards
Left: ebay.com; Right: Duke University Libraries

In the Lakes Region, Hart's Turkey Farm opened a 12-seat restaurant on the Daniel Webster Highway in Meredith in 1954 specializing in turkey sandwiches and dinners. In 1965 the family phased out raising its own turkeys. The restaurant has been expanded several times since its construction but remains in operation today.



Hart's Turkey Farm website

In the Seacoast Area, Newick's Lobster House opened a seafood roadside stand on Great Bay in Dover in 1948. The original location was displaced by the construction of the Spaulding Turnpike in the 1950s. The family purchased its current location in 1960. The 50-seat restaurant, expanded in 1982, was destroyed by fire a year later. It was rebuilt to accommodate 650 people and is still in operation today at 431 Dover Point Road.

Diners

The history of the diner goes back to the early 20th century in New Hampshire but became even more popular during the mid 20th century. Perhaps it related in part to the decline of the trolley car and railroad and a growing nostalgia. Equally important was the fact that they could “just as easily be plunked a few parking-space widths back from the curb of the highway strip as sandwiched between buildings along Main Street”.²¹ Diners were also flashy, making them ideal for attracting the attention of passing motorists or truckers.

During the mid 20th century diners were a common sight throughout New Hampshire, located along main roads between communities as well as in busy downtown areas. The classic diner is a custom built, prefabricated building which was assembled in one or more sections and delivered to a specific location. In 2014 Larry Cultrera published *New Hampshire Diners: Classic Granite State Eateries*, the definitive guide to the state’s diners. At that time there were 29 diners in the state. Most date from the 1920s to 1950s and were primarily built by Massachusetts firms including the Worcester Lunch Car, J.B. Judkins Co. of Merrimac and Pollard and Co. of Lowell. There are also a few built in New Jersey in the 1950s.²² It is not surprising that diners were often relocated and in some cases diners have been moved out of New Hampshire. The oldest (1920s) diners include the Milford Red Arrow Diner, Red Barn Diner in Manchester and Joanne’s Kitchen and Coffee Shop in Nashua.

Among the most unique diners are the Bristol Diner, one of only two Pollard diners still in existence, Daddypop’s Tumble Inn Diner in Claremont (1941), a rare Worcester Lunch Car from the late 1940s, and Lindy’s Diner in Keene (right, 1961) which is the only Paramount diner in the state as well as the only 1960s diner in the state.²³



Lindy's Diner, 19 Gilbo Avenue, Keene

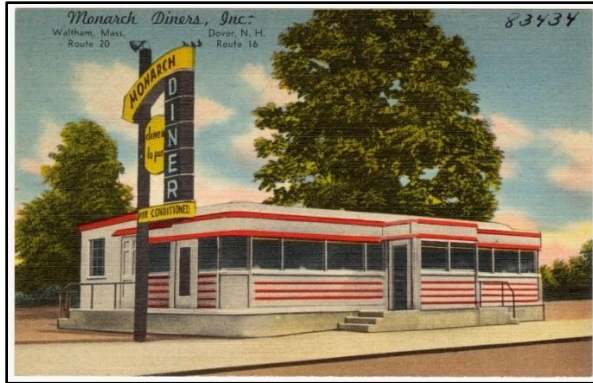


Gilley's at 175 Fleet Street in Portsmouth (left) is a lunch wagon built in 1940 by the Worcester Diner Company. Only five were built by the company and this is the only one in full-time use today. A wing was added in 1996. Gilley's is located in a National Register-listed district.

²¹ Liebs, p. 219.

²² Larry Cultrera, *New Hampshire Diners: Classic Granite State Eateries*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014.

²³ Ibid.



Monarch Diner, Boston Public Library, Tichnor Brothers Postcard Collection

The Sunny Day Diner in Lincoln (right) is a rare example of a diner manufactured by the Master Diner Company of Pequannock, New Jersey. It was called Stoney's Diner and located at 523 Central Avenue in Dover from 1958 into the 1980s. It was moved to Lincoln in 1988 at which time the barrel roof was added over the original monitor roof.²⁴



Above: Sunny Day Diner, Rt. 3, Lincoln
Left: Four Aces Diner, 23 Bridge St., Lebanon



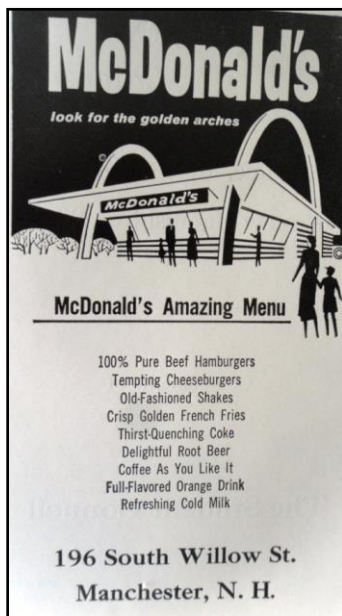
The Four Aces Diner in Lebanon (left) is a 1952 Worcester Lunch Car which was encased in a building in the 1980s, at which time it was also moved a short distance from its original location. Despite its exterior appearance, its interior remains very much intact.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 33.

Fast Food Restaurants and Drive-Ins

Fast food restaurants and drive-in restaurants are a 20th century development that embodied the spirit of the automobile age offering quick, inexpensive meals for those on the go. In some cases one could even receive curb service and eat out in one's vehicle. New Hampshire fast food restaurants and drive-ins included both chain restaurants and independent operations.

The McDonald's chain of restaurants is notable for a tie to New Hampshire that many are not aware of. The chain's founders, brothers Maurice and Richard McDonald, were born in Manchester but later moved to California in the late 1920s.²⁵ They opened their first McDonald's with walk-up window service in San Bernardino, California in 1948. The first building to include the iconic golden arches was built in Phoenix, Arizona in 1953 although older buildings were retrofitted to include them. Maurice and Richard McDonald sold the company to Ray Kroc in 1954. The first McDonald's in New Hampshire was constructed in 1964 on South Willow Street in Manchester. There was no interior seating and customers typically ate in their cars. The Manchester McDonald's was opened by Bill Vanderwolk who subsequently operated 17 franchises throughout the state until he sold the restaurants in the 1980s. A bronze plaque inside the restaurant is dedicated to the McDonald brothers. The restaurant, like many in the chain, was rebuilt several times, in this case in 2000 and 2012.



c. 1964 views of first McDonalds in NH, 196 South Willow Street, Manchester, as it originally looked

²⁵ Richard McDonald eventually moved back to New Hampshire, settling in Bedford. He died in 1998.

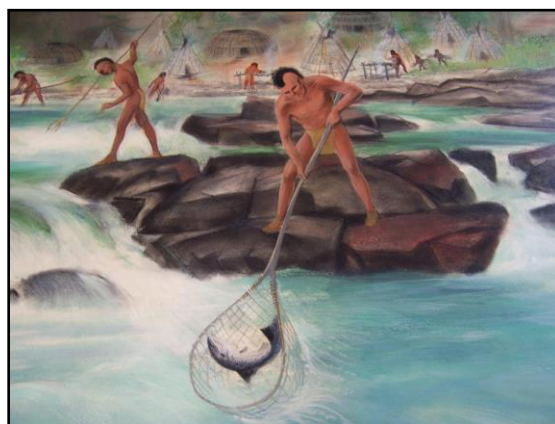
By the late 1960s, many of the original Golden Arches stores had been modified with enclosed walk-up order areas and limited indoor seating.



Example of standard c.1970 McDonald's design

In June 1969, McDonald's introduced a new "mansard" roofed building design featuring indoor seating, a brick exterior and cedar shake look roofs. The new design became the standard and franchise holders were ultimately required to demolish older restaurants and replace them with the new design. The standard c.1970 design with mansard roof with projecting ribs is still the norm for the McDonald's restaurants in many New Hampshire communities.

A recent notable preservation project related to a McDonald's restaurant occurred in 2012 when the Hooksett Heritage Commission successfully conserved two murals which had originally been installed in the McDonald's restaurant that was built at the corner of Route 3 and Martin's Ferry Road in 1974. When the restaurant was remodeled by Vanderwolk Enterprises in 1984, the dining room was redecorated and the murals were donated to Hooksett schools. The two unnamed murals depicting Native American life were painted by New Hampshire artist William Abbott Cheever (1907-1986). The murals now hang in the council chambers of the municipal office building.



Restored Hooksett mural by William Cheever
NH Preservation Alliance



Though in most cases older signs are removed when restaurants are rebuilt, some older signs can still be found such as this c.1960-1970 sign at Newington (left). The Meredith McDonalds (right) is of note for its unusual "Colonial" sign.

Among the other fast food franchises which operated throughout New Hampshire in the 1960s was Howdy Beefburger. Howdy Beefburger was founded by William Rosenberg who also created Dunkin Donuts. There were eventually about 27 restaurants in the Boston/New England area. The chain ceased operation in the late 1970s, facing growing competition from McDonalds and Burger King. Originally the Howdy Beefburger and the Dunkin Donuts were separate buildings that shared a parking lot. Sam Silverstein opened a combination Dunkin Donuts and Howdy Beefburgers on South Main Street in Concord in 1965.²⁶ In Keene there was a Howdy Beef Burger at 189 West Street; it is now a D'Angelo Sandwich Shop which is still located next to a Dunkin Donuts. Others were located at 200 Temple Street in Nashua (now Ronnie's Diner), near the train station. In Salem the Howdy Beefburger operated by Maurice Needle opened at the southwest corner of Route 28 and Kelley Road in 1963. Like all the Howdys it offered burgers for 15 cents and fries for 12 cents. It closed in 1968.²⁷ A Howdy Beefburger was also located at 200 Temple Street in Nashua in the 1960s.



Howdy Beefburger, Rt. 28, Salem
Katherine Khalife and Douglas Seed, *Images of America: Salem, NH*, p. 115.

Another burger chain of the period was Burger Chef. In Dover, a Burger Chef opened at 530 Central Avenue about 1970. It was only open a few years. The Tedeschi Market that is on the site today may incorporate the former Burger Chef building and displays a low gable profile that was indicative of the chain's restaurants. A Burger Chef was also located at 738 Islington Street in Portsmouth but that building has been removed.

²⁶ "Diversification Thru Ownership of Multiple Franchise Brands", Dunkin Donuts Independent Franchise Owners, June 9, 2009.

²⁷ Katherine Khalife and Douglas W. Seed. *Images of America: Salem, NH Volume 1*. Dover, NH: Arcadia Publishing, 1996.



Fabulous 50s Car Hop Drive-In, Rt. 103, Newport (former A & W)

The first A & W drive-in restaurant opened in Sacramento, California in 1923. Roy Allen and Frank Wright are credited with creating the first system of franchise roadside restaurants. By 1960 there were over 2000 A & W drive-ins nationwide including one in Newport.²⁸ The drive-in is still there today although a new building was constructed in 2005. The Weathervane Restaurant at 2 Dover Point Road in Dover is a former A & W Restaurant but the drive-in has been enclosed.²⁹ The Cityside Grille in Concord at 25 Manchester Street was also an A & W Drive-In. Other A & W's were located in North Swanzy and Claremont.

Dogs 'N Suds was a national chain of drive-ins established in 1953 and reaching its peak in the 1970s with 600 stores operating in 38 states, primarily in the Midwest. The company went bankrupt in the 1990s and only a few remain today, none of which are in New Hampshire.³⁰ In the 1960s there was at least one in New Hampshire, in Keene.



Keene Directory, 1968

Mr. Hot Dog opened its 24-hour eatery at 303 Main Street (Rt. 3) in Nashua in 1967. The building now houses Poor Pierre's Restaurant. The modern design has fixed windows set into aluminum frames with orange enamel panels below and a low gable roof with overhanging eaves. The former Big John's in Concord displays the same design less the enamel panels which have been replaced by brick. It is located across from the shopping center which was built on the site of the former Concord train station, razed in the 1960s. Although the two buildings were constructed according to the same design, it is not known if they were related.

²⁸ www.awrootbeer.com and Newport Directories

²⁹ Peter Michaud, 2017.

³⁰ www.roadarch.com



Left: Former Mr. Hot Dog, 303 Main Street, Nashua; Right: Former Big John's, Storrs Street, Concord

Other small drive-ins include the Tamarack in Laconia which opened in 1962.



Tamarack Restaurant, 691 Endicott Street, Laconia

Keniston's Drive-In Restaurant was located across from the lower river bridge on Route 3 in Concord. It was operated by the Makris family.



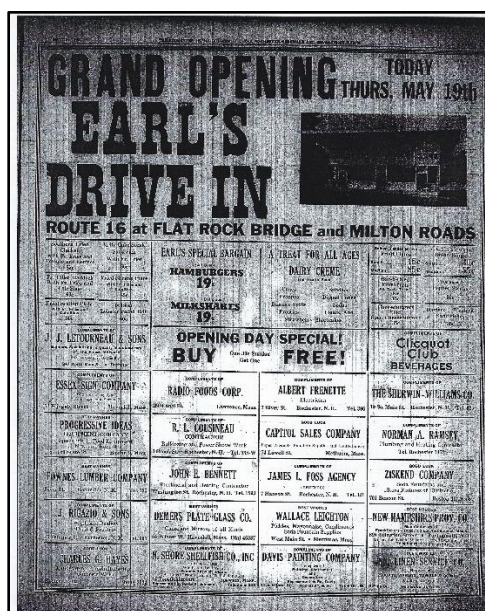
Keniston's, Rt. 3, Concord. *New Hampshire Profiles*, 1960

In Manchester, the Goldenrod Drive-In at 1661 Candia Road has been serving seafood and ice cream since 1951.

In 1955 John Earl of Haverhill, Massachusetts erected one of New Hampshire's most iconic drive-ins in Rochester after consulting with state officials in Concord to determine the best location for a family-friendly restaurant for people driving through New Hampshire. He based the modern design on a drive-in in Saugus, Massachusetts called the Car Adventure Hop. It had a flat but pitched roof with a large overhang lit on the underside by neon tubes. Despite its name, the drive-in never offered car service. It was open seasonally in the warmer months. In 1957 the name was changed from Earl's Drive-In to Martin's after it was sold to Martin Navelski of Rye. The stand was known for its onion rings and was the first in the area to offer soft serve ice cream. The building was hit by a car in 2003 but the façade of service windows built of aluminum and glass block was rebuilt. It was demolished in 2015.³¹



Earl's/Martin's Drive-In, 2 Flat Rock Bridge Road, Rochester (gone)



Full page grand opening announcement appearing in *Rochester Courier* on May 19, 1955

³¹ Lisa Mausolf, Inventory Form for Earl's Drive-In, Rochester (ROC0066), Feb. 2015. On file at the NH Division of Historical Resources.

Dairy Bars and Ice Cream Stands

Mid century dairy bars and ice cream stands are a common sight along New Hampshire roadways, even if most are only open in the spring and summer. The stands were constructed in a variety of styles but signage to attract passing automobiles was a given. Contrary to their names, few dairy bars limit their sales to just ice cream.

(At right: Sign for Red Hill Dari, Moultonborough)



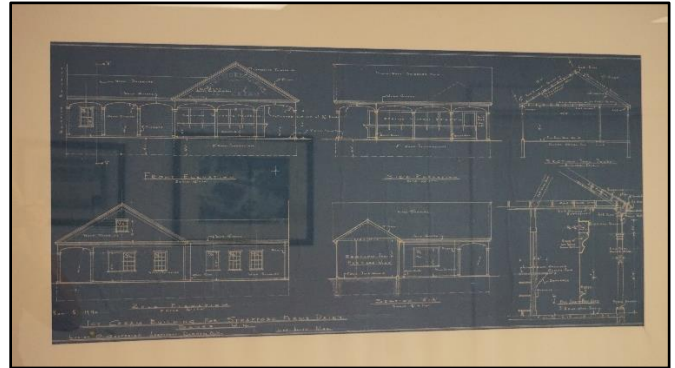
Hayward's Ice Cream opened on the Daniel Webster Highway in Nashua in 1940. In 1942 the building was moved back about 100 feet way to make way for parking. In addition to its premium homemade ice cream Hayward's is also known for its steamed hot dogs which were added to the menu in the 1970s.



Hayward's Ice Cream, Nashua

The building has seen a few changes over the years but retains its basic design. Another Hayward's is located on Rt. 101 in Milford but has seen more substantial alterations.

Strafford Farms Ice Cream opened on Rt. 16 in Dover in 1940. The Colonial Cape Cod style structure was designed by Durham/Portsmouth architect Lucien O. Geoffrion who also designed the original Yoken's Restaurant in Portsmouth. The framed original blueprints for the ice cream building are on display inside.³² The original arrangement of serving windows sheltered by a canopy has been altered.



Strafford Farms, 58 New Rochester Road, Dover

In nearby Rochester, Lone Oak Ice Cream (below) has operated at 175 Milton Road since 1962. The numerous order windows are still sheltered by a wide overhang and the signage is illuminated by fluorescent bulbs. A second story with gable roof has been added on top of what was originally a shed roof. Lone Oak is located just up the road from the site of the former Earl's/Martin's Drive-In, with whom it had a healthy rivalry. It continues to serve both local families and those passing by on their way to the lakes.



³² Thanks to Peter Michaud of the NH Division of Historical Resources for bringing the existence of these drawings to my attention. A brief biographical entry for Geoffrion is found in the Appendix of this report.

In the Lakes Region, Sawyer's Dairy Bar was first opened by George Sawyer in Gilford in 1945 as a stand on the side of the road selling dairy products. During the 1950s a fire destroyed much of the original building which was reconstructed with the infamous turning sign on the roof. In addition to homemade ice cream, the seasonal stand also sells fried clams, lobster rolls, burgers, sandwiches, etc.



Sawyer's Dairy Bar, Lake Shore Drive, Gilford

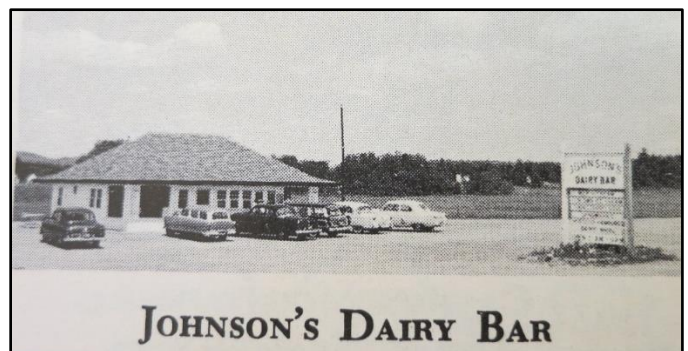
Cremeland Drive-In in Manchester is located at 250 Valley Street and was originally known as Mimi's. It was opened in 1947 by Armend and Cecile Gaudette and offered ice cream, popcorn, and locally produced Schonland hotdogs. The summer tradition survives today.



Cremeland, 250 Valley Street, Manchester

Located on Rt. 4 between Concord and the Seacoast Johnson's Dairy Bar in Northwood dates back to at least the 1950s but has been added on several times over the years.

Right: Johnson's Dairy Bar, as seen in *New Hampshire Profiles*, 1960



In the southwest corner of the state, Diamond Acres Ice Cream on Rt. 9 in Hillsborough, was constructed in 1962 and was of modern design with overhanging eaves and projecting rafters. The building was destroyed by fire in 2008 and although the roadside sign survived a few more years, it was later removed.



Diamond Acres Ice Cream, Rt. 9, Hillsborough (building & sign no longer extant)

The southern tier ice cream stand known as King Kone opened on Rt. 3 in Merrimack on March 17, 1972.³³ Its crenellated design is reminiscent of the White Castle hamburger chain.



King Kone, Rt. 3, Merrimack

³³ *Nashua Telegraph*, March 18, 2012.

Lodging

In the early 20th century tourist cabins and cabin courts were constructed throughout New Hampshire for travelers seeking comfortable and private yet affordable accommodations. They were constructed along roads frequented by tourists, along the roadside, on farms, next to diners and/or near parks and scenic attractions. By 1940, most travelers expected private bathroom facilities and where earlier cabins incorporated kitchens, these generally were remodeled into bathrooms. In the postwar years, individual cabins, each with its own plumbing and furnace had generally slipped from fashion.

In New Hampshire, while the cabin colony was waning in popularity, it was still evident in decreasing numbers in the 1940s. The Palmer Lodge constructed on Rt. 9 on the border of Keene, Sullivan, and Roxbury is one example. It started in 1943 as a small group of cabins providing travelers with an opportunity to experience New Hampshire hospitality. The complex included a dining hall/restaurant and lodging in a main house or cabins, all of log construction with live edge siding. Later additional structures were added and Pinnacle Ski Area (now Granite Gorge) was constructed across the street. The Lodge closed in 1973 and today the complex of structures adjacent to Otter Brook State Park awaits reuse.



Former Palmer Lodge, Rt. 9, Keene, NH

In the postwar years, the nationwide trend toward motel construction gained momentum as automobile travel became widespread and new motels were increasingly favored over older tourist cabins and cabin courts. It has been estimated that between 1940 and 1960 the number of motels in America tripled, from approximately 20,000 to over 60,000.³⁴ In 1962 there were 1,507 motels and tourist courts in New Hampshire.³⁵

³⁴ <http://vintageroadside.com/motorcourts.aspx>

³⁵ Paul Hendrick et al. *Vacation Travel Business in New Hampshire: A Survey and Analysis*. Concord: State of New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, April 1962, p. 12.

In some cases older inns or cabin colonies were updated with a few new free standing motel units.

At Lovett's on Rt. 18 in Franconia, seven "Mountain Modern" cottages were added to the grounds of the c.1820 inn in the 1950s. They are still in use today.

Right: Advertisement from *New Hampshire Profiles*



Savoie's Lodging in Center Harbor updated its early 20th century cabin colony by constructing a modern c.1960 motel building with four units alongside the road.



Savoie's Lodging, Rt. 3, Center Harbor



In many ways, the motel was a refinement of the cabin court. Each room had its own entry and guests could park right by the door. Constructing a line of rooms offered an economy of scale – more units at a lower cost and in less time. Like the cabins that came before them, motels were typically laid out parallel to the highway for maximum visibility. Where road frontage was at a premium they could be oriented with an end to the road, counting on signage to attract the passing traveler. The motel plans could be a single row or a “L” or “U” or even “V” shape layout. In addition to the guest rooms, motel complexes typically include an attached office and a small reception area. Motels are typically a single-story in height; two-story versions have balconies and multiple stairwells.



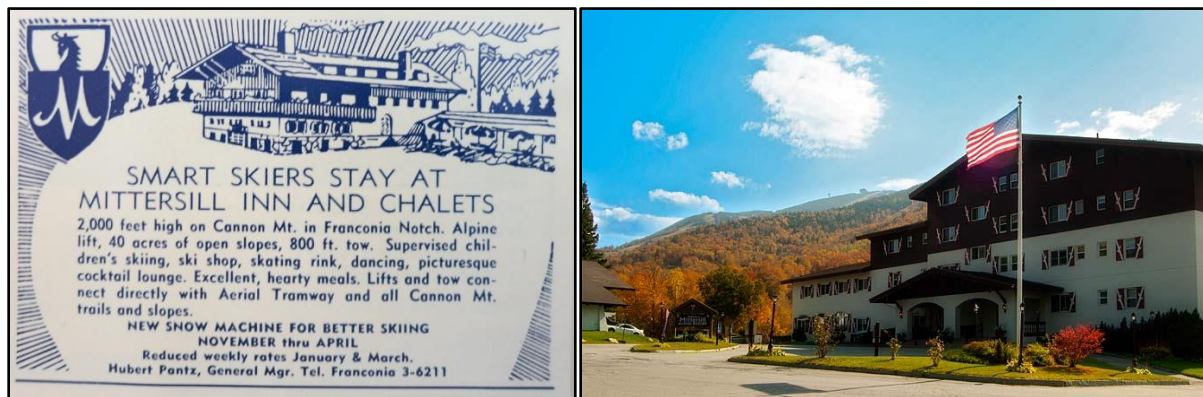
Palmer's Motel, 3301 White Mtn. Hwy, Sanbornville

Some motels included a restaurant, an outdoor lobby or courtyard with chairs, playground equipment and/or outdoor games. In time, in-ground, outdoor swimming pools became commonplace amenities.



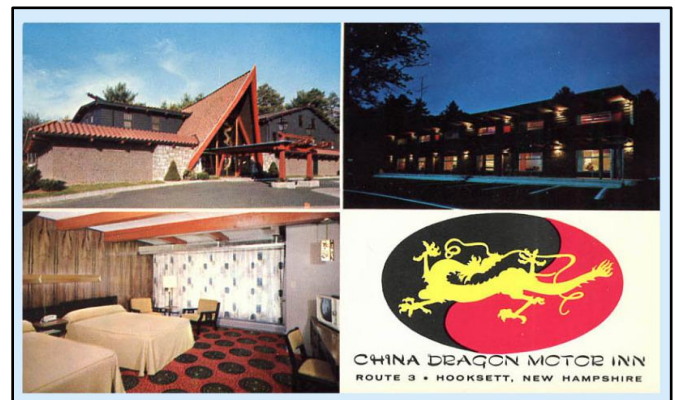
Paquette's Motel, Rt. 3, Twin Mountain (gone)

Motels differentiated themselves with a variety of architectural designs and gimmicks. In the White Mountains, an Alpine theme was appropriate. The Mittersill Alpine Resort and surrounding village chalets were built in Franconia in 1945 in an authentic Austrian style by Baron Hubert von Pantz who is credited with bringing European style skiing to America. In 1964 the Baron expanded the original inn into a grander resort before selling the resort to relatives and retiring to Austria in 1969. In 1979 the new owners began the process of converting the interior from hotel rooms to units with full kitchens. Today the Mittersill Alpine Resort is devoted to vacation ownership.³⁶



Mittersill Resort, Franconia
Top: *New Hampshire Profiles*, 1957; Bottom: Current view, www.mittersillresort.com

Other unusual lodging establishments of the period include the 1960s China Dragon Motor Inn and Restaurant on Rt. 3 in Hooksett operated by Harry Moy. The building was destroyed by a fire in early 1988 although the marble dragons that once adorned the front of the restaurant are now located on the grounds of the Prescott library.³⁷ It is interesting to note that about a dozen motels were located in Hooksett in the 1950s and 1960s.



³⁶ <http://www.mittersillresort.com/>

³⁷ <https://hooksetthistory.wordpress.com/2010/09/09/china-dragon-menu-found/>. It was located on Hooksett Road, just north of Riley's Guns.

During this period older hospitality facilities went to great efforts to stay fresh and up-to-date. Indian Head Resort opened in Lincoln in 1913 with ten campsites. Over the years that followed 74 English Village bungalows were constructed as well as a wooden observation tower (later rebuilt in steel) on the west side of Rt. 3 to view the Indian Head Rock Profile. In the 1950s the 100-foot observation tower was relocated across the street along with the main office. To supplement the bungalows, motel accommodations were constructed above the main lobby (described as a new roof garden hotel in advertisements) and a new coffee shop, soda bar and dining room were added. The complex has continued to grow over the years but has been operated by the Spanos family since 1962.³⁸



Indian Head Resort, Rt. 3, Lincoln
Left: c.1960 Postcard; Right: current view from parking lot

Motels built with curving offices included the Lancaster Motel in Lancaster which is still in business today and the Queen City Motel/Motor Inn in Manchester, which is no longer used as a motel.



c.1960 postcard, Lancaster Motel, 112 Main Street, Lancaster

³⁸ <http://indianheadresort.com/history-of-indian-head-resort/>

The designs of a few New Hampshire motels were published in the AIA publication, *New Hampshire Architect*. These included the Winding Brook Lodge in Keene and the Perkins Motel in Littleton, designed by Norman Randlett of Laconia; the Queen City Motel in Manchester, designed by Carl Peterson of Manchester; and the Notchway Motel in Franconia, designed by Shepard Vogelgesang. The Winding Brook Lodge was unique in that it was sponsored by a group of local businessmen who formed a corporation to promote and conduct a highway hotel. On opening day in February 1954, over ten thousand people came to view the new facility.³⁹

The Meadowbrook Inn in Portsmouth occupied a key location between the New Hampshire and Maine Turnpikes. The ultra-modern facility was reportedly the first of its kind in the Seacoast Region and offered “living proof that modern design can be both beautiful and functional”.⁴⁰



Meadowbrook Inn, Rt. 1, Portsmouth (gone)

The hotel was designed by Portsmouth architect Lucien Geoffrion with the assistance of Hampton interior decorator, George Carpenter. The attention to detail included wrought-iron furniture with wheaton upholstery, solid hardwood furniture including double beds in each guest room, a private bath done in pastel shades with colored fixtures and walls nearly eight inches thick. In addition to the lounge there was a gift shop for “lady travelers” and as of 1953, an outside swimming pool was planned.⁴¹ The Meadowbrook Inn was demolished in 2008.



Illustrations from NH
Profiles,
July 1953

³⁹ *New Hampshire Architect*, March 1954, p. 7.

⁴⁰ *New Hampshire Profiles*, July 1953, p. 26.

⁴¹ *New Hampshire Profiles*, July 1953.

In Laconia, the Quarterdeck Motel was constructed on U.S. Rt. 3 in the 1950s and was described as the “newest ultra-modern sound-resistant motel in the Lakes Region”. The 17-unit two-story motel offered views of Lake Winnepesaukee through large panel windows in grid formations giving the building a modern design. Though slightly remodeled, the Quarterdeck Motel is still in operation today.



Quarter-deck Motel, 832 Weirs Blvd., Laconia
Vintage postcard, Author's collection.

In addition to privately-owned motels, there were also some associated with various national chains. An Imperial 400 Motel was constructed at 481 Central Avenue in Dover c.1960. The chain had been founded in 1959 in California by Bernard Whitney. Typical of the chain, the Dover motel was a two-story motel with “gull wing” shaped roof over the lobby and echoed in the roadside sign.⁴² The overall effect was reminiscent of the “Googie” style of Mid Century Modern architecture, which developed in California. Later the Dover motel was known as the In-Towne Motel. Today, it survives in an altered form and operates as a Days Inn.



c.1960 view of Imperial 400 Motel, 481 Central Ave., Dover (now Days Inn)
Postcard collection of Peter Michaud

⁴² John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle, Jefferson S. Rogers. *The Motel in America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, p. 160.

Howard Johnson's Lodging

New Hampshire had a number of Howard Johnson's over the years, ranging from cabin courts to modern hotels. The Howard Johnson's constructed along Rt. 3 in West Thornton, north of Plymouth, was designed to attract skiers/motorists on their way to Franconia Notch. It was constructed in the mid 1940s and was unusual in that it consisted of a line of cabins toward the back of the lot with a separate freestanding restaurant fronting Rt. 3.



c.1950 Postcard West Thornton Howard Johnson's (gone)

The West Thornton Howard Johnson's was perhaps the most short-lived of the franchise's New Hampshire establishments. The bypass of Rt. 3 by Interstate 93 appears to have led to the demise of the Howard Johnson cabins and restaurant in West Thornton which closed about 1960.⁴³

More typical were the modern Howard Johnson's complexes consisting of an orange-roofed A-frame gate lodge, motor lodge, restaurant and pool. In 1960 the first such complex in New Hampshire with sixty rooms was constructed in Concord, just off Interstate 93 and clearly visible from the new highway.⁴⁴ The hotel was torn down and the restaurant which had been remodeled into the Capital City Diner, was removed in 2000 to be replaced by the Common Man Restaurant.

In Nashua a Howard Johnson's motor lodge opened in 1967 at 170 Main Dunstable Road, visible from the Everett Turnpike. The gate lodge was damaged and removed in the 1990s; the motor lodge and restaurant are no longer extant.⁴⁵

⁴³ <http://www.highwayhost.org/NewHampshire/Restaurants/WestThornton/westthornton1.html>

⁴⁴ <http://www.highwayhost.org/NewHampshire/Concord/concord1.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.highwayhost.org/NewHampshire/Nashua/nashua1.html>

In Portsmouth, a Howard Johnson's restaurant predated the later motor lodge. About 1950 the restaurant was moved across Rt. 1 to make room for a new grade separation at Woodbury Avenue. A few years later the gate lodge and motor lodge were built on the adjacent property at the Traffic Circle. Today, the Best Western operates the former Howard Johnson's at 580 U.S. Rt. 1 Bypass. The Roundabout Diner is a former HoJo's restaurant.⁴⁶



Howard Johnson's being moved, *New Hampshire Highways*, Jan. 1950



Rendering of Portsmouth Howard Johnson's showing both the original Colonial style restaurant and the later modern lodge and motel units

A five-story high rise motor lodge opened at 298 Queen City Avenue in Manchester in 1972. The building still stands and is currently operated as a Comfort Inn.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Today, a new hotel operates under the Howard Johnson's name at 383 Woodbury Avenue in Portsmouth, facing the Traffic Circle.

⁴⁷ <http://www.highwayhost.org/NewHampshire/Manchester/manchester1.html>

During the 1960s the motel evolved into the motor inn, motor lodge and the highway hotel. These new forms offered main entryways rather than individualized entries, formal lobbies and common interior hallways. There were also more extensive interior public spaces which often included an indoor pool, recreation areas and restaurants or lounges.⁴⁸

One of New Hampshire's most famed motels/highway hotels was undoubtedly the New Hampshire Highway Hotel in Concord, constructed in 1951. Though called a "highway hotel", it was essentially a one to two-story motel of over 100 rooms with a central larger building (possibly added later) containing restaurants and entertainment spaces overlooking a pool. It was however strategically located at the junction of Routes 3, 4, 9, and 202 (later Rt. 93) in Concord. Huge signs advertised the facilities to passing motorists

Hotels and motels figured prominently in the history of New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary. Although the state has held a presidential primary since 1916, it was not until 1952 that the primary began to assume its current importance. Since that time New Hampshire has been a major testing ground for candidates. The New Hampshire Highway Hotel in Concord hosted some of the most important political figures in the country until its demolition in 1988. The Pizzeria Uno restaurant at 15 Fort Eddy Road currently occupies the former hotel site.



New Hampshire Highway Hotel, Concord (gone)

The Wayfarer Hotel and Convention Center in Bedford was also especially popular in primary years. It was demolished in 2015.

Right: Sheraton-Wayfarer, Bedford-Manchester (gone)



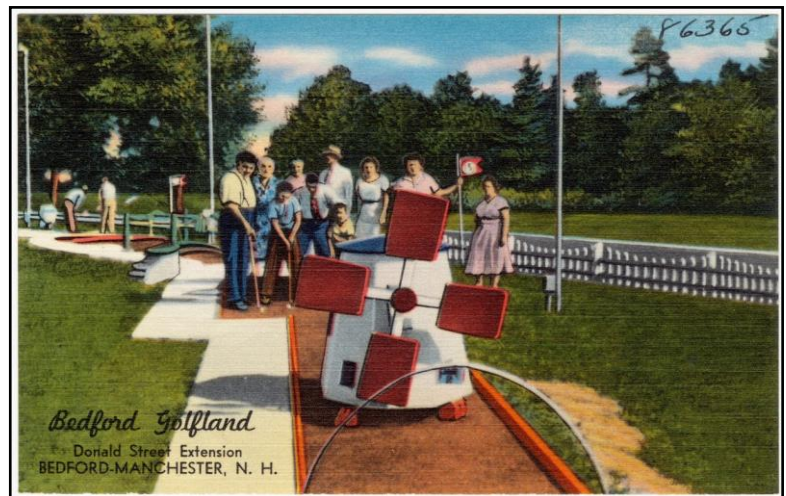
⁴⁸ Mark Okrant, *No Vacancy: The Rise, Demise, and Reprise of America's Motels*. Concord: Plaidswede Publishing, 2013, p. 4.

Miniature Golf Courses

In the period following World War I there was a resurgence of interest in the game of golf. Practice courses were developed as well as courses with fanciful settings that were initially intended to attract children. As adults found that they too enjoyed the small challenges and fun inherent in these small courses, miniature golf became a new form of family amusement. The Depression and a period of economic uncertainty temporarily lessened the popularity of the game but a renewed emphasis on family travel after World War II resulted in the construction of new courses. The miniature golf courses were typically constructed along tourist routes and near resort areas. In some cases, larger motels even featured their own mini golf courses.

Some of the golf courses were company designed. Tom Thumb Golf was the first miniature golf franchise and was established in 1929. In the early 1930s it was estimated that about a quarter of the miniature golf courses in the country were Tom Thumb patented designs with various objects used as obstacles and small hazards.⁴⁹ In 1955 Al Lomma introduced a new era to mini golf with the use of mechanized hazards such as rotating windmill blades. Most of the post-World War II period miniature golf courses in the state incorporate both. Many New Hampshire course owners developed themes based on regional motifs and popular imagery.

Bedford Golfland was constructed near the Bedford-Manchester town line in the 1940s. It was a simple course which included a variety of hazards and challenges including windmill blades, a tunnel at the base of a lighthouse and a loop-the-loop. The course was recently demolished for the construction of a supermarket.



Bedford Golfland, Boston Public Library, Tichnor Brothers Postcard Collection

⁴⁹ Ransom Riggs, "The Zany History of Mini Golf", Sept. 10, 2008. <http://mentalfloss.com/article/19567/zany-history-mini-golf>. One Tom Thumb course was located at 375 Ocean Boulevard in Hampton and dated back to the 1950s. It is no longer extant. Another was located at Canobie Lake in Salem but is now the site of a parking lot.

Funspot in Laconia opened its “Landmarks of New Hampshire” mini golf course in 1964. It included scale models of NH icons such as the M.V. Mount Washington, the North Conway Depot, covered bridges and other railroad structures built by Fred Thompson of Conway and later Cal Hahn.⁵⁰ The refurbished landmarks were reinstalled in a new inside mini golf facility in 2014. The 1950s Casino Mini Golf Course at Hampton was also renovated into an indoor course in the 1980s. Buc’s Lagoon (formerly Go Go Putt) at 59 Ocean Boulevard in Hampton incorporates a collection of whimsical sculpture by Darrell O’Connor including a large pirate, a tiger, a witch, a rocketship, the tin man from the Wizard of Oz and a sun flower.⁵¹ Twinkle Town Mini Golf was established in 1961 on Rt. 12 in Swanze, near the Cheshire County fairgrounds. It retains the feel of a c.1960 mini golf course and incorporates a number of small structures including covered bridges, log cabins, etc. Miniature golf continues to be a popular activity but most of the courses in the state were constructed or substantially rebuilt in the last twenty years.



Buc’s Lagoon, Hampton <http://roadside wonders.net/tag/new-hampshire/>

The history of this little roadside structure in Weirs is not known but it may have originally stood in a miniature golf course or other amusement area.



⁵⁰ Funspot 50th Anniversary History, 1952-2002. <http://www.funspotnh.com/history.htm>

⁵¹ See John Grady, “Hole in One: Casino Mini Golf”, *New Hampshire Seacoast Sunday*, August 23, 1987. Buc’s Lagoon was originally constructed about 1970. It was moved from Ashworth Avenue to its present location in 1975.

Drive-In Movie Theaters



Weirs Drive-in, Laconia

Richard Hollingshead opened the world's first Drive-In Theatre in Camden, New Jersey on June 6, 1933. His design included an open field, an oversized screen and a projection building. Bullhorns mounted on the drive-in screen acted as a sound system. By 1942 there were almost one hundred drive-ins located in 27 states. But it was not until after World War II that the idea really gained momentum, thanks to improved technology in the form of in-car speakers.

In 1949, in response to the dangerous traffic conditions caused by drive-in theaters, legislation was introduced in New Hampshire to give towns the power to regulate the location and operation of drive-in theaters. At the same time Connecticut legislators were proposing legislation to prohibit the construction of drive-in theaters along State Aid or trunk line highways.⁵² Yet drive-ins continued to be constructed and other amenities were often added including concession stands, playgrounds and even train rides. Their popularity was however short-lived. By the 1970s the drive-in theater was in decline due to in part to the introduction of daylight savings time and the growing popularity of television.⁵³ In New Hampshire the drive-in obviously also ran into seasonal problems due to the climate.

By 1948 there were over eight hundred drive-ins nationwide including two in New Hampshire. In 1949 the Pine Island Drive-In was operating in Manchester and construction had started on a 500 car capacity spot on the highway between Dover and Rochester. The peak year for drive-ins in New Hampshire was 1963 when there were 23. Most of these were constructed in population centers or tourist destinations.

Today, only four drive-ins are still in operation in New Hampshire. The Northfield Drive-In Theatre in Hinsdale was built on the New Hampshire/Massachusetts state line in 1948. The original owner, Carl Nilman, was a pioneer in the drive-in business and eventually owned ten or more in New Hampshire and Massachusetts of which only the Northfield Drive-in is still in business. The original screen was destroyed by a hurricane in 1951 but the rebuilt screen maintains the original dimensions of 80' x 54'.⁵⁴

⁵² *The Billboard*, June 4, 1949.

⁵³ Rick Cohen, "Hollingshead's Story", History of the American Drive-In Theatre.
www.newyorkdriveins.com/history

⁵⁴ <http://www.northfielddrivein.com/history/>

The Weirs Drive-in Theater in Laconia was established in 1949 and has a snack bar and four screens. The Milford Drive-In has two screens and a snack bar and opened in 1958. The Northern Nights Drive-In in Lancaster has a single screen.



Milford Drive-In

Other drive-ins which once operated in the state include the Meadows Drive-in, Woodsville; Bedford Grove in Bedford; Skyhi Drive-in, Boscawen; Claremont Drive-in; Grand View and Princess in Gorham; Sky Ray in Hooksett; Keene Drive-in; Litchfield Drive-in; Midway Drive-in, Littleton; Pine Island Park Drive-in in Manchester; Nashua Drive-in; Newington Drive-in; White Mountain Drive-in, Conway; Seacoast Drive-in, North Hampton; Starlite Drive-in, Orford; North Country Drive-in, Ossipee; Plaistow Drive-In; Rochester Drive-In; and the Rt. 16 Drive-in, Somersworth.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ <https://drive-ins.com/theaters/nh>

Tourist Attractions

Supplementing its natural beauty and historic sites, New Hampshire has a long history of building roadside (and trackside) attractions. Canobie Lake Park in Salem and Pine Island Park in Manchester both opened in 1902, sponsored by trolley companies who sought to increase ridership. Rockingham Park in Salem opened in 1906. Benson's Wild Animal Farm in Hudson first opened to the public in 1926. In the northern part of the state early roadside attractions included Polar Caves which opened in Rumney in 1922 and Clark's Trading Post in Lincoln which dates to 1928.

After World War II rising incomes and increased mobility brought more families in station wagons to New Hampshire to vacation. In response, local entrepreneurs constructed new family-oriented attractions, many of which continue to operate today.



Located on Rt. 2 in Jefferson, Santa's Village was opened in June 1953 by Normand and Cecile Dubois of Lancaster. The only rides initially were pony rides; the first mechanical ride was introduced in the 1960s.

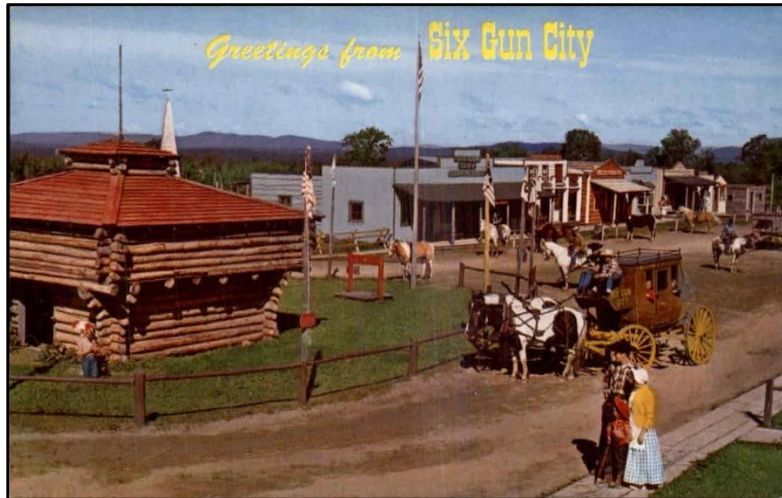
Left: c.1950 view of Santa's Village,
Boston Globe, July 5, 2015

In 1954 World War II veteran Bob Morrell and his wife Ruth opened Storyland in Glen. The park features were inspired by favorite children's books and initially the only ride was a fire truck that took visitors on a path through the woods. Storyland remains a family favorite. An interactive museum known as Heritage New Hampshire operated next to Storyland from 1976 to 2006.

Right: c.1960 advertisement for Story Land



In 1941 James and Eleanor Brady bought the Crawford dairy farm on Rt. 2 in Jefferson. In 1954 they opened a dairy bar which was followed in 1957 by the opening of Six Gun City. Today, it is operated as Fort Jefferson Fun Park.



Some of the tourist attractions built during the period were educational in focus. For example, in 1960 work began on the reconstruction of Fort No. 4 in Charlestown as a historical museum. The fort had been the northernmost British settlement along the Connecticut River until after the French and Indian War.



Souvenir/Gift Shops etc.

Souvenir and gift shops are commonly found in areas of the state visited by tourists. While many were operated in conjunction with major tourist attractions or motels, others conveniently located themselves on heavily traveled roads where visitors might be enticed to stop and purchase trinkets, postcards and other souvenirs.



In some cases, these small roadside buildings took on a particular theme, most often western or Native American. Hayward's Trading Post in Milford is a southern New Hampshire landmark which bills itself as the "World's Largest Moccasin Store". As seen today, the log building store is lacking the Native American embellishments on the roofline, visible in this c.1960 postcard view.



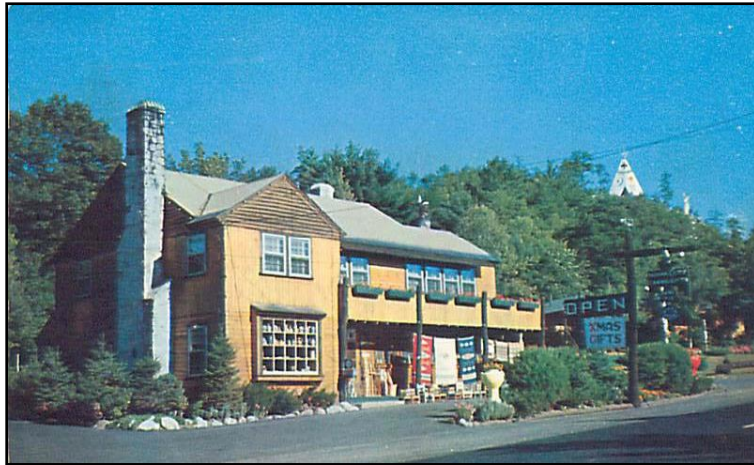
Hayward's Trading Post, 359 Elm Street, Milford (c.1960 postcard)

In the Lakes Region, the Meredith Trading Post on Rt. 104 is similarly a log structure, in this case decorated by totem poles. Here however the repeating broad gables of the façade suggest a c.1970 construction date (note the similarity to the design of the Diamond Acres Ice Cream stand in Hillsborough).



Meredith Trading Post, 521 NH Rt. 104, Meredith

Located on the heavily traveled U.S. 3 and 28, six miles north of Manchester, the Indian Cliff Western Curio Shop in Hooksett was operated in conjunction with a motel. It appears to date to the 1940s and is still in business today as Eagles Nest Emporium.



Indian Cliff Western Curio Shop, Hooksett (historic postcard)



1501 Hooksett Road, Hooksett (today)

Not all of the gift shops of the period display a Western theme. One of the more unusual tourist attractions in the state during the period was the Alton Bay Reptile Zoo and Gift Shop. In 1940 Eugenia Shorrock purchased a farm in Alton to house her ever-increasing collection of snakes and exotic animals. Although the Reptile Zoo closed to the public in 1967, the gift shop remained open until 1990.



In the words of a 1950 advertisement, the gift shop offered “A choice line of Jewelry, and Gifts for all occasions. Miniatures & Collectors Items. Toys – Souvenirs- & Greeting Cards. NEW Arrivals from the Far East.”⁵⁶

Left: Historic postcard, Reptile Zoo & Gift Shop, Alton Bay

Another small gift shop that advertised widely in the 1950s was the Jewel Box on Route 3 north of Plymouth. The small roadside building still stands today.



Jewel Box, Plymouth, *New Hampshire Profiles*, 1955

Throughout the state, shops sold a variety of New Hampshire products. Sanborn Candies opened in the early 1950s on Rt. 125 in Plaistow and later expanded to Hampton. In the 1950s Annalee Thorndike began making and selling her collectible dolls in Meredith. In 1956 the craft centers of the League of New Hampshire Arts & Crafts (changed to the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen in 1968) were open all year in Concord and Keene, from mid-June to Christmas in Hanover, North Conway and Sharon and only in the summer in Bristol, Center Sandwich, Crawford Notch, Franconia, Hancock, Haverhill, Meredith, Newfields, New London, Rye and Wolfeborough.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ “Alton Bay, New Hampshire Reptile Zoo”, AnitaNH blog, January 22, 2010.

<http://anitanh.blogspot.com/2010/01/alton-bay-new-hampshire-reptile-zoo.html>

⁵⁷ *New Hampshire Profiles*, July 1956.

IV. Conclusions/Recommendations for Future Study

Examples of automobile-era resources are found throughout the state and there are many which have not yet been recognized or documented. Roads which were bypassed by highways and areas where economic conditions did not allow for continual upgrading of properties tend to offer the highest probability for discovering resources that have not been totally altered.

As stated by Chester Liebs in his book, *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*:

The preservation of the structures that form the roadside commercial landscape is a far more formidable task than the preservation of most other building types. Take the issue of exterior change, for example. When a roadside building is outfitted for a new use, its owners are usually eager to recloak the structure with a fresh image. After all, the need for an up-to-date sales costume to appeal to motorists is one of the programmatic imperatives of architecture for speed-reading. As a result, throughout successive changes in function, the appearance of a roadside commercial building is much more likely to be ephemeral.⁵⁸

This document is intended as an annotated framework, a first step in preparing a comprehensive context for Post World War II Automobile Era Roadside Architecture in New Hampshire. Recommended further work includes:

- Defining integrity considerations for the resources of the mid-20th century.
- Continued work perhaps by region on Roadside Architecture. This might be useful in developing additional *Retrotours* such as was developed for Route 3 between Weirs Beach and Pittsburg, New Hampshire in 2011 by New Hampshire's Division of Travel and Tourism Development and a Plymouth State University team headed by Mark Okrant (<http://www.visitnh.gov/uploads/pdf/new-hampshire-retro-tour-updated-may-2011.pdf>).
- Further research into specific firms and architects, including monographs.

⁵⁸ Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995: 225.

- Given the increasing rate of demise of 1950s and 1960s, a survey of surviving lodging properties of that period.
- Research on White Mountain National Forest and New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development/State Park tourist-related resources.



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Riviera Motel, 479 Gonic Road, Rochester

Appendix

Addition to Brief Biographies of NH Mid Century Architects

The following architect was not included in the Brief Biographies of Architects included as Appendix C of *Mid 20th Century Architecture in NH: 1945-1975*. During the course of this study it became clear that Lucien Geoffrion was involved in many Mid Century projects in the Seacoast region. The following brief biography is an attempt to correct that omission and add to the information we have of practitioners of the period.

Geoffrion, Lucien Omer (1908-2001)

Born in Manchester and a graduate of Newmarket High School. Attended the University of New Hampshire from 1928 to 1930 and studied at the Atelier of Beaux Arts in Paris and the Boston Architectural School. He worked as a Junior Designer for Little & Russell, Architects in Boston and as an architect for the U.S. Navy. He was practicing architecture in Durham by 1938 and in 1942 organized the firm of Lucien O. Geoffrion & Associates. In addition to being he was a practicing architect he was assessor for the City of Portsmouth for 20 years. Moved to Florida in 1970.

Representative NH works: Strafford Farms Dairy Barn, Dover (1940); Maplewood Acres, Portsmouth (1941-1947); Yoken's, Portsmouth (1946); Meadowbrook Inn, Portsmouth (1953); Temple Israel, alt. and library add. (1954); Portsmouth Country Club (1955); Bernard Goodman Residence, Portsmouth (1958); Pic' n Pay Super Market, Portsmouth (1960).